

Dear Parents, Guardians and Carers

We are passionate about using traditional fairy and folk tales in our magazines. They are tales that have been passed down through ages of storytelling, and we believe that they contain important messages about our past, that can also tell us something about our present and maybe even our future.

However, we also know that through the ages, the people telling the tales have adapted, improved, extended, or edited to suit their own times and circumstances. This is something that we hope can continue, even in an age where oral storytelling has disappeared.



When we select our stories, we look at the content carefully and we often have long discussions about what to keep, what to adapt and what to discard. If a tale has been adapted, we make sure to state that under the title of the story. If it has not, we simply credit the author - or origin - of the story, if known. If we have made a significant change, such as to the gender of the protagonists, we will also make this clear in a short explanation before the story begins. We would encourage parents, guardians, and carers to read our stories too, and to always feel free to edit and adapt them in whatever way they see fit.

Many traditional stories have traditional gender roles and relationships. We encourage you to flip these roles or change the nature of these relationships if this is important to you or your child. You might wish to keep the story in its original form and ask questions afterwards. Or you might just want to read the story, let it sink in for a day or two and see what kind of questions come out of it. Many fairy and folk tales share a particular feature: there is a sense of resolve or harmony at the end of the story. We believe that in a world that is often chaotic, competitive, and full of disharmony, keeping this element to stories is an important way of helping to nourish a creative life in a child that is full of goodness and beauty.

For this issue, we talked a lot about whether we should we include a fairy tale (A Suitor for Young Mole) that potentially reinforces gender stereotypes and patriarchal roles in arranged marriages. However, we recognised that the story was from a particular historical and cultural tradition. We also saw that the story contained truths about the characteristics (and value) of moles in a way that was also rooted in the natural world. We suggest that if you are concerned about the issues we have identified, consider flipping the genders in the story, or introduce the story with some information about how marriages were made in the past, and why they were made in this way. Of course, arranged marriages still happen in some cultures, and there might be a learning opportunity in doing some research around this difficult issue.

It is up to you if you want to bring these questions to the children you care for. You know them best! Happy reading!

And thank you for supporting our magazine,

The A Year and a Day Team

